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Wednesday, March 4, 1942

SUBJECT: "Vegetable Oils" Information from Triple A officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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During recent weeks you have been hearing about this year's supply of some of the common foods on your table eggs, dairy products, and meat.

The supply outlook for those foods is quite encouraging. At least... it looks that way at the present time. Of course, even the experts find it hard to see very far into the future during war.

But the heartening thing is farmers are going out to produce more of these foods this year than ever before.

Today I have more information from the United States Department of Agriculture to pass along to you. And this time the information is about the probable supply of fats and oils during 1942. It isn't quite as assuring as the information I've given you on other foods. But it really doesn't give much more cause for immediate worry.

First, the consumption of fats and oils in the United States is on the increase. It has been ever since our defense program got under way. In fact--- people in the United States used more fats and oils last year than ever before.... and officials predict the demand this year will be ten percent greater.

That's on the demand side. Now for supplies.

Here's where the picture changes. We normally import about a billion and half pounds of fats and oils....many of them from the area involved in war.

The war with Japan has virtually cut off our normal far Eastern supply. And that's important. We have come face to face with the fact that imports of fats and oils from the Pacific areas may be decreased a billion pounds.

We usually depend on the Far East for three oils.....tung, coconut and palm oil.

Tung oil, the quickest drying oil known, is used in manufacturing paints and varnishes, while coconut and palm oils are important for use in cooking and in quick lathering soap.

If we're to have enough fats and oils to meet the demand, the supply that we used to get from the Far East will have to be replaced by more fats and oils produced here at home.

That's why the 1942 farm production goals set up by the Department of Agriculture provide for a vast increase in the growing of vegetable oil crops in the United States...soybeans, peanuts and flaxseed, especially.

In fact....farmers plan for two and a half times as many acres of peanuts as they raised last year... half again as many acres of soybeans, about a third more flaxseed, and a slight increase in cotton seed.

Here's why these crops are the important ones.

After peanut oil is refined, it makes an oil nearly as good as a high grade olive oil for salads. Peanut oil along with soybean and cottonseed oil finds use in vegetable shortenings. And flaxseed oil goes into paint.

Those 1942 production goals for fats and oils are really tremendous. But the Department of Agriculture officials say unless farmers meet these goals, we might miss meeting our total needs of fats and oils in 1942 by eight or ten percent.

Of course, the country has a big supply on hand now....enough to meet our needs for a year, even if the production in the United States is no bigger than normal. But...unless the goals for 1942 are met, our total supply may grow short by 1943.

Agricultural officials think farmers and manufacturers can meet the goals, if they can over come several difficulties.

One problem is seed to plant these additional acres. Experts say there is enough seed if it's properly distributed.

And that distribution problem is a tough one, because each locality where these crops are grown needs to have seed adapted to the specific soil and climate conditions. That means the right seed has to be put into the right place. Experts are working right now on this problem.

Then there's the problem of getting the necessary machinery to harvest these crops....and getting the facilities to turn the crops into oil.

Again Department of Agriculture officials say these problems have solutions. And if everything goes well the goals will be met.

One more fat especially important in 1942 is lard.

Last week you heard about the great increase in hog production this year... and the fact that farmers are feeding hogs to heavier weights before selling them. This means more lard...And plenty of lard can help make up for the possible shortage of vegetable oils.

But just another word of caution. Department of Agriculture officials again emphasize that the United States is one of the 26 United Nations who are sharing their resources to win this war. And to foresee the exact future, and estimate the total food needs during the next year is difficult.

But all in all...the supply picture for fats and oils a year from now is not quite as encouraging as the supply picture of eggs, dairy products and meat.

Next week listen for the latest information on canned vegetables in 1942.

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